

Lights and Shadows

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Lights and Shadows 1973

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LIGHTS & SHADOWS 1973

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R. Kirby McCraney

Dukas

He took a right and hurried down the narrow sidestreet.
The rain had quit and the sound of water dripping
Echoed up and down the cobblestones.
Fog slowly climbed out of the black river.
He passed a shopfront over which hung a sign
With fading yellow letters on a fading red background
And a one inch border all the way around.
Across the top of the sign were the words:
 "We shape words like metal."
And across the bottom were the words:
 "Our vibrations have color."
In the center was a painted scorpion.
He walked quickly, hat pulled low, hands in his coat pockets.
And hurried for the iron footbridge
That crossed into Sachsenhausen.
But he never made it to the iron footbridge.
One of the last things he thought about
Was that the drops of water coming off the buildings
Reminded him of the last movement of Sorcerer's Apprentice.

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Is This Phase Two of Frank Zappa?

After Stravinsky died Frank Zappa took his place
The same way Jerry Garcia took the place of Ravel....

I think these thoughts while Lumpy Gravy plays;
As side two fades into a Miro landscape
And filters off into a technicolor universe.
No matter. It will surface later on
In an Arthur C. Clark story
And I can pick it up at a bookstore for \$1.50.

A Real Hot Dog Decision

We walk away from the fire
And the people laughing around it
And the table full of food and beer.
We sit on a wooden bench in the darkness
And I wonder if I should kiss you.
I should, I know, but first I must decide
If my emotions could stand to shiver in the cold
If you said no.

How Was the Sunset Turring Bought for Lunch?

Turring was close to running out of money
And still looking for a job
When he decided to leave Frankfurt.
The last I heard of him
Was that he had a wreck in his VW on the way to Sweden.
I never did hear if he made it, or why he was going.
I still have the album of Laurendo Almeda
Playing with the Modern Jazz Quartet
He gave me before he left.

How Was the Burnt Senna You Bought For Lunch?

When my stomach remembers
That the tubes of paint I bought today
Were worth several cans of pork and beans
And a carton of milk,
My mind also recalls
That more than one art dealer
Hurried past the hungry gaze of Kupka
On his way to the house where Villon lived.
And that they would not mind having the pieces he left behind.
So one night a couple of days before he left
He loaded the artwork on the green pickup
And drove to a bridge
Where he dumped everything he could not take with him
Into the deepest part of the river.

The Metal Sculptor

He was a good metal sculptor
Who taught art in a small college
And worked with torch and goggles in the night.
His friends never offered to buy anything
And never had much to say about the things he made.
They rarely said much at all till
The day they heard he was moving north.
Slyly they began reminding him that
There was too much to take along
And that they would not mind having the pieces he left behind.
So one night a couple of days before he left
He loaded the metalwork on the green pickup
And drove to a bridge
Where he dumped everything he could not take with him
Into the deepest part of the river.

Asking About Emily

There are saints who walk the solitary fields of earth.

I met him late one afternoon on a deserted mountain
On an ancient unused road covered with pine needles.
He was old and had a beard and was full of wisdom.
We talked for a long time discussing first one thing then another.
Finally I asked him about Emily Dickenson.
Her poetry is full of quiet beauty I told him,
And it reminds me a lot of this mountain.
She is doing well he smiled
But she does not write so much as she use to.
Mostly she watches sunrises and sunsets,
And spends a great deal of time
Listening to Nutcracker Suite on the stereo.

Karen Swig

They Came and Got My Friend Jim Today

They came and got my friend Jim today.
(I saw it all on the evening news at six.)
The police broke down his door early one morning
Toward the end of November,
When the sun had not risen above the mountains yet.
Jim was still in bed dreaming dreams.
They did not even show him the courtesy
To let him wake up peacefully in his own bed,
Or think about his life and what he might do that day.
They did not even let him brush his teeth or drink a cup of coffee.
They found two joints
And hauled him away in a pair of handcuffs.

Karen Konig

"I Think There is Nothing TO PEARL than Snow on a Cold Day"

I think there is nothing better than snow

Little woman child lost in a world

of make-believe people selling make-believe love
in artificial bottles.

Abandoned in a cage of luxury, waiting for the
moment when the caretaker will release you to
perform for the people.

The people! Jesus, what you will give for the
people. Wild, sensuous animal, doing your tricks,
obeying their demands, all for a crumb tossed
from their almost-empty bags. "Save a piece for
me!" you cry, and the people answer. Alas! You
must return to your cell and face the darkness.
Alone.

Jeanna Wells

"I Think There is Nothing Better than Snow on a Cold Day"

I think there is nothing better than snow

on a cold day

wrapped in a security blanket

isolated from the chill, I sit.

The holy crystals fall silently.

Twisting in harmony

With winter's cold currents

Crossing and rubbing

In encompassing hushes.

Limbs aching and numb,

Creaking and groaning

Against withered echo

Of parched, wrinkled remnants

Of leaves once green

Now clinging to notes,

Sad dirge hushed and whispered,

Shadows of symphony, shadows of life.

Jeanne Wells

Autumn Reflections

Bare, tangled, twisted branches
Starkly etched, gauntly curved
Irresolute to winter's chill
Stand shivering, shaking
Alone, desolate.

Twisting in harmony
With winter's cold currents
Crossing and rubbing
In cacaphony hushed.
Limbs scrape and hum,
Creaking and groaning
Against withered echo
Of parched, wrinkled remnants
Of leaves once green
Now clinging to notes,
Sad dirge hushed and whispered,
Shadows of symphony, shadows of life.

History's winters etched in
 Bark damp, brown, cracked
 withered peels from lichen's hold
 Hard, rough nuts chased by squirrel's grasp
 In woodpecker's holes and paths of ant's crawl
 Stark straw-woven nests once vibrant
 With life, chirps, and flutter
 To return in time, after
 Completing life's cycle
 Of annual revolution.

Cycles of torment, cycles of change
 Dancing leaves caught by swirling gusts
 Leaving twisted branches knarled and naked
 Only buds whisper of revolution's spring
 Yesteryear's sorrows opening to blue sky
 Of hope and spring and rebirth to come.

YOU HAVE TO BE TAUGHT

My parents are the product of a lower middle-class, white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, Southern environment. I grew up in the same environment, guided by my parents. I remember vividly an incident that happened when I was five years old. My mother and I were visiting my grandfather, who lives in what was once part of the cotton belt of Alabama. My father and mother were in this county. The tradition of viewing the the Black as mentally and socially inferior is well-established there. But I knew nothing of this then. I was a child and all I wanted to do in the immediate future was to play.

I had found a playmate of my own age. I had discovered this playmate when I had accompanied my mother on her visit to the child's parents. They were neighbors of Grandfather's. My mother went there for the purpose of borrowing a broom, my grandfather having forgotten to buy a new one. Immediately I spied this little girl of my own size, swinging in an old tire which was suspended from a giant sweet-gum tree. I asked my mother could I please go and play with that little girl. Mother said yes. Looking back, I can see that there was no courteous way for Mother to refuse. Mother was a guest.

The little girl (I don't remember her name) and I became fast friends. We liked to do the same things: look for wild

sinking sensation. I didn't know what the word meant, but it must mean something horrible. To be a "nigger" must mean they were bad, or surely my mother would let me go to their house and spend the night.

Then I remembered that she had borrowed a broom from them, shelled butter beans with them, and seemed to be very friendly with them. I asked her about it. She said that she had been reluctant to borrow the broom, and that shelling butter beans with some one was very different from spending the night with them. I accepted this quietly. She seemed relieved. She had done her duty, as she saw it, so she turned back to washing the dishes.

I don't remember ever seeing my little playmate again. I was reluctant even to go near her house. I was ashamed because I had placed myself into such a position. I was ashamed to look at my friend's brown skin and kinky hair that I had once thought so pretty. They now branded her a "nigger," someone with whom I must not associate.

Perhaps she caught a glimpse of me in the car with my parents when we left to go home. Perhaps she waved. I didn't see. I couldn't and mustn't see. I now had my own set of blinders.

WHEN I DIE

When I die, I shall not be snuffed
and dampered in a siege of dark.
I shall ride out, majestic and bright
in cloaks of light. Energy rider.

WHEN I LIVE

When I live, I shall not be crumpled
wastepaperlike by inhuman humanity.
I shall ride out, majestic and bright,
a cloak of light: sun-happy bright.

BLOOD

Hotter than wine, in ruby streams
and thin, flowing, with water, peace,
and ululation, cross meadows
and pasture and warm in the pine.
I saw His crown, it snarled up high
and clenched the rosebud sweet. The thaw,
the warmth, the moist of the earth,
the trickles of sadness away.

Easter, blossoms dropping.

The slow struggle of morning bells.

EASTER PAEAN

Easter, blossoms dropping:

I watched the lily unfold with
perfumed and celestial lobes.

The greenery is here. Easter, you
almost perfect. were needed.

Trembling limbs, frosted with redbuds,
hover an anthem. Easter, you
came when you were needed.

Lilacs kindled sweet scents.

Rhododendrons, on distant crags,
waited for the stroke of spring to
unlace, unleash

their clusters. Dawn,

the Earth motion, has christened
the crags and sent some squirming pale
fibers up the branches.

Easter, blossoms dropping.

The slow struggle of morning bells.

Soft and timid tumescent chants

of transient birds,

hidden, bidden

to song by acres of foliage.

Incense and anthems. Easter, you

came when you were needed.

THE DEATH FLOT

They say it don't matter

What you say

cause they tell you

Emily Edwards

you're gonna die one day

But it's a lie

I have touched

the eater of dogs,

and know this

I have touched men

who walk

with the Lord,

and yet

I would prefer

the damned company

of the dog eater

when it's all a fantastic plot

it's all a lie

no one's gonna die

no more than I

they ain't gonna die

THE DEATH PLOT

They say it don't matter

What you say

cause they tell you

you're gonna die one day

But it's a lie

you ain't gonna die

no more than I

you ain't gonna die

They say it don't matter

What you do

cause they say one day

you're gonna be through

you're worried about the heaven

and you're worried about the hot

you're knockin your brains tryin to be good

when it's all a fantastic plot

It's all a lie

no one's gonna die

no more than I

they ain't gonna die

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Paul Jackson
(1973)

PARTY

Hello!

The door opens to the black and red
and the burbon with a beat,
They are all so glad you came
(Tho they can't recall your name),
the room breathes with the beat...
the token beat, the token belle, the token beau,
and the token negro
putting a fleshy arm across your back
and offering good times in a glass...
-blanketing your head in warmth
and phonograph music...good times,
There is the actor and the musician,
working hard at their trade
(perfecting characters they've made),
giving token kisses
like little fishes cured in vinegar and tobacco
(I am having such a good time
that all i can think about is going home
to wash away the Ginger, the Fred, the debonair
and all the red lipstick)

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Dale Jackson
(1973)

LINES WRITTEN IN SPRING

End your weeping, dread voices be quieted
A young day in Spring filters the soul.
New showers melt and dampen the cool earth,
Purifying streams, each rivulet that runs.
They flow their existence, an expression to be.

Turn from your hyacinths, sadness and woe,
Go to the garden, see sunlight there.
It dries the dew from leafs and grass
Like tears on your cheek, they fade and slip away.
The change takes place, each in special ways.

Grim wonderings yesterday are past today,
Let out your soul, like new leaves
Waiting to bloom. Stronger, less fragile,
It's a tested course through treacherous straits,
Known for its safety through hazards.

He died in the winter, gone forever; past.
Tears and grief as bitter as cold have been shed.
Now remorse has no reason to line your face, or
Make eyes bright, solemn.
Sorrow, like the winter, has no place today.

(con't)

See the endless rows of tiny violets pattern
the yard. Watch as they change color across the
Fence. Rosebuds bloom and purple the green
While locust trees scent the spring air
They've not been discovered before today.

They're for you, the sun gives life to life.
This and more, before unknown to you,
You'd been away so long, dead like Lycidas.
Now a different way marked by the sun's parallels
Awaits you, a simillence of self, fresh and alive.
Go! Nothing died, but was born anew.

No. 3 (From LINES ON LINES)

TWO SEA ANEMONES AND A STARFISH

In my thoughts, there appeared you.
Not the whole, yet much of the sphere.
I stopped beside the ocean
Tinged with speculation.
Two sea anemones and a starfish
Acted a tense, dramatic situation.
I looked at the fiery sun
For, perhaps, some glimpse of reason.
Meanwhile, the two sea anemones and starfish
Never reached resolution
(I'd grown tired that day
Of asking why and simply
Sat on a shell washed in
From the deep sea).
Let the parts create a sphere, one ending
Where the other begins, never to know one
From the other. A dream of dreams within a dream,
Built upon secrets of truth.

No. 3 (from LINES ON LINES)

In my thoughts, there appeared you,
Not the whole, yet much of the sphere.
To try to exclude would be to lose
That much love, and, isn't that much of the answer?

To fill the worlds that exist beside you,
Many days and words spoken became clearer,
Much like obscure images in glittering pools
of water appearing sharper; those days when
Love was a hazy shimmer, not yet known.

Much came, much went, the truth often behind lies,
Cornered as if by dogs. Prufrock timidly smiled
Even in the fog, while sirens from faraway worlds
Pierced the night; truth emerging but still hampered.

Yet the parts create a sphere, one ending
Where the other begins, never to know one
From the other. A dream of dreams within a dream,
Built upon secrets of truth.

David Lyford

Page One

(An allusion to Paul)

(1)

The rusted hazel-nut tree
stands magnificently
grand
it stands
not indifferently

(con't) as it silently

Days and nights flow in and out woven

By a delicate thread of dream-like fragments.

A crystalline sphere shines out its many perspectives;

And your reflection is a brighter beam,

Always a part, you stand, Your body...your face.

and like

in an area of solid

undeclared

land

of sand

unhidden

unhidden

its silent solid silhouette

a leafless threat.

Daniel Byford

Page One

(An allusion to Paula)

(1)

The roasted hazel-nut tree
stands magnificently
grand

it stands
not indifferently

does it silently

cling to the blue-gray

skies
of the indeterminate day

It cries

it sighs

and lies

in an area of arid

undeclared

land

of sand

unhidden

unbidden

its silent stolid silhouette

a leafless threat.

(2)

The small silver stream
its gleam
an arrow of delight
the white
foamy cream
in tight
right
angles to the shore
its roar
is giggling
along between a wriggling
broken line
of solemn somber pine
It leaps
or creeps
or snatches at the trees
and in degrees
it wets
then lets
the bark get slowly dry
and wry
meanders
slanders
by.

By Daniel Byford

Bog Worm

Went fishing

down by

the old mill creek

was wishing

for a new

days

(3)

The mellow breeze

does please

the trees

which range beside the stream

and pine

they do and are

and far

they line

and seam

the now glimmering

tributary

Shimmering

but wary

she takes

what she can carry

and breaks

across a mossy shelf

and down she dazzling falls

leaving one reaching

breaching

the walls

within himself.

By Daniel Byford

Bog Worm

Went fishing
down by
the cat tail creek
was wishing
for some new
days
a blue
sky.
Peek
under a log
for bait and there lays
amazed
and straight
a little brown bog
worm.

Squirming
for a spell
under my gaze
he did well
to exist
on such short notice.

Then with a craze
of a twist
as if one
would not miss
him there in the sun
he spun

By Daniel Byford

Bog Worm

Went fishing
down by
the cat tail creek
was wishing
for some new
days

a blue

sky.

Peek

under a log

for bait and there lays

amazed

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a little brown bog
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Squirming

for a spell

under my gaze

he did well

to exist

on such short notice.

Then with a craze

of a twist

as if one

would not miss

him there in the sun

he spun

By David Sibby

I left all this one day

and deftly
left me
like a fool
with my arm
outstretched and danglin
(unwinding like a gangling
undirected spool).

Can a bog worm
himself bring any harm
or care
where
he's running to or from?

To dip and turn
And roll and slide
Stone's own will
Reminded me of the
Mastering of a thought
From conception to concrete
Or the mastering
Of one's body on the
Balloon stage,
Or the mastering
Of the peculiar traits
Of a racing bull,

(Cont.)

By David Kibby

I Left All This One Day

I left all this
One day
And soared between
White clouds
The size of
Islands over my home,
It was precisely at
3:15 P.M.
That day my senses shifted
From that of an earth-walking
Primate to an extraordinary
Freedom of a bird,
To dip and turn
And roll and climb
At one's own will
Reminded me of the
Mastering of a thought
From conception to concrete
Or the mastering
Of one's body on the
Ballet stage,
Or the mastering
Of the peculiar traits
Of a racing hull,

(Cont.)

Or a thousand other
Perfections hard sought,
Hard won and hard kept,
But,

I've only been in this airplane
Five minutes,
What makes me think
I accomplished something
Special?

Simply,

I've found a joy
Something worthwhile to lift
Me above myself in every sense,
And how often has
That,
Ever happened, to me?

Jane L. Hodges

" I N S P I R A T I O N "

Here my life is gathered around me,
In this tiny spot of time,
Where only soft songs and enchanted dreams can grow,
In fields of clover and meadows of dandelion.

Once for a moment, in sudden haste,
Day lived only to meet the night,
But now the spell is broken,
And what is wrong can not be right.

Treasured hours of blissful wonder,
Make reality seem tragically unreal,
For in the light of knowledge,
Sorrow's thoughts are made only to feel.

Sing me songs of rapture,
To a world so meek yet strong,
Give me prayers for living,
In a world of constant wrong.

Deliver me from the oppressor,
Make my words speak forever to say,
That since now the unknown is opened,
Truth is the lasting way.